

*The Example of JESUS in his Youth, recommended
to Imitation:*

IN A

4476. 66-100
3

S E R M O N

PREACHED AT

ST. THOMAS'S,

JANUARY 1, 1780.

FOR THE

BENEFIT of the CHARITY-SCHOOL

IN

GRAVEL-LANE, SOUTHWARK.

k. BY

ANDREW KIPPIS, D. D. F. R. S. and S. A.

Printed at the Request of the MANAGERS.

L O N D O N :

PRINTED BY H. GOLDNEY, PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

[PRICE SIXPENCE.]

1054



A

S E R M O N, &c.

LUKE ii. 25.

AND JESUS INCREASED IN WISDOM, AND
STATURE, AND IN FAVOUR WITH GOD
AND MAN.

GREAT numbers of persons have, without doubt, sincerely wished that the history of our Saviour's youth had been more full and particular: and it must be acknowledged, that such a circumstance would have been extremely agreeable to that curiosity which is implanted in the human mind. It would furnish a delightful entertainment to read the remarkable sayings or actions of his infancy, to contemplate the progress of his knowledge, to learn the sentiments of his neighbours concerning him, and to survey the manner in which he was employed, before he entered upon his grand work.

B

But,

But, however pleasing this might be, the providence of God hath ordered it otherwise, for valuable reasons. The scriptures were not written to gratify an inquisitive disposition, but to promote our spiritual instruction, our inward holiness, and our immortal felicity. In this view, it was proper for them to contain such things only as were more immediately connected with the salvation of man; and, of course, chiefly to insist on our Lord's public ministry. The evidence of his divine authority, the nature and design of his revelation, and such of his transactions as had an intimate relation to the scheme of our redemption, were the affairs alone with which it was necessary for us to be acquainted: and had other matters been treated of, the sacred volumes would have been enlarged to a degree that would have rendered them less useful in themselves, and less capable of being perused, digested, and remembered.

But though little is said of the early life of our great master, yet the little which is said is enough to convince us that his conduct was entirely excellent and engaging; and that it held out an admirable model of the attainments and accomplishments which should be zealously recommended and enforced upon those who are in the days of their youth. To shew this, we have pitched upon the beautiful description given of him by St. Luke, "*That he increased in wisdom, and stature, and in favour with God and man.*" In treating upon these words we shall endeavour,

I, To

I. To point out the virtues which we may suppose, entitled the blessed Jesus to the character of the text; and which should be possessed by all young persons, in order to their obtaining the same character. And,

II. Shall conclude with one or two practical remarks.

I. We shall endeavour to point out the virtues which, we may suppose, entitled the blessed Jesus to the character of the text; and which should be possessed by all young persons, in order to their obtaining the same character. And,

1. One of the virtues which, we may suppose, entitled the blessed Jesus to the character of the text, was a regard to God in the whole of his behaviour. This is a virtue of essential importance, and very extensive in its nature. It is, indeed, a virtue which is the proper foundation of every other attainment, and which, in its genuine influences and effects, includes all the graces of the spiritual life. How early this divine temper began to display itself in the Saviour, we might well conclude from the account of the text, had we no other testimonies. For he would not so speedily have advanced into such peculiar favour with the supreme Being, unless he had been eminent for the devotion, obedience, and love which he maintained towards him. But our Lord's staying at Jerusalem, after Joseph and Mary had set out for Galilee, affords an extraordinary instance of the warmth of the principle of piety that animated his breast,

breast, and of the earnest zeal which he had for the honour of God, when he was no more than twelve years of age. Such was the delight which he took in the sacred entertainments of the temple, that he could not easily persuade himself to depart from them: and when his mother expostulated with him, with all the tender anxiety and vehemence which are so natural to a parent's heart, his answer was, "*How is it that ye sought me, knew ye not that I must be about my Father's business?*" or, as some would render the words, "did ye not know that I ought to be at my Father's house?" Thus we see that the first exercise of his rational powers was in the service, and for the honour of the eternal Jehovah.

This, too, is the manner in which all young persons should set out, in their passage through the world. "*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;*" and, therefore, *the fear of the Lord* should early take place in their minds, as the only principle that can guide them safe through the path of life, and lead them on to a glorious immortality. They should remember their Creator in the days of their youth; remember him as a Being who is eternal, independent, the Maker, and Governor of the Universe; as that Being who hath an absolute right to their veneration, affection, obedience, and submission; as that Being who hath brought them into existence, hath loaded them with kindnesses, and is the source of all the happiness they enjoy. Hence they should

should consecrate their opening faculties to the great fountain of perfection and bliss; and maintain a perpetual intercourse with their heavenly Father, by praising him for his mercies; by seeking to him for all needful supplies, whether temporal or spiritual; by loving his most holy name, and by complying with his commandments. Such a regard to the Almighty as produces these excellent effects, is certainly one of the dispositions by which young persons should grow up into the favour of God and man. How acceptable youthful piety is to God, is plain from the honourable mention that, in this view, is made of Josiah and of Timothy; and from that divine promise of religious wisdom, *Prov. viii. 17.* "*Those that seek me early, shall find me.*" Nor can we doubt but that youthful piety will be proportionably acceptable to good men. All those who are themselves the sincere servants of Jehovah, will esteem it a charming sight to behold the rising age devoted to their Maker: nay, even the wicked cannot refrain from acknowledging and admiring the beauty of such a prospect.

2. Another of the attainments which, we may suppose, entitled the blessed Jesus to the character of the text, was his great proficiency in valuable knowledge. That this proficiency was prodigiously great, though he had not the advantages of a liberal education, is represented to us at large, in the account of his staying at Jerusalem before-mentioned. When Joseph and Mary had returned to that city, they found

found him sitting in the midst of the teachers of the law, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And we are expressly informed, that all who heard him were astonished; were in a transport of admiration, at his understanding and answers. Nor could even his parents, though better acquainted with the sublimity of his genius, and the dawnings of heavenly light that appeared in him, avoid being struck with wonder. That his advancement in knowledge was surprizing and uncommon, is evident from the repeated testimonies of sacred writ. Thus, in the text, we are told that *he increased in wisdom, as he increased in stature*; and in the fortieth verse of the chapter, we read that “*the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom.*” Indeed, we have reason to believe that he had peculiar communications from heaven, to assist him in the prosecution of these divine attainments. In this respect, as well as in others, the grace, the favour of God was upon him in an extraordinary manner. But notwithstanding his being thus illuminated from above in early life, yet that he was not willing to neglect the ordinary methods of acquiring instruction, is manifest from the inquiries he proposed to the doctors in the temple; one end of which undoubtedly was to obtain such information in matters of importance, as these doctors were able to afford him.

And is not the example of the Saviour, in this respect, highly worthy to be imitated by such as are in the days of their youth? Though
young

young persons cannot have the same supernatural opportunities for knowledge which Jesus had, yet their gracious Creator hath provided, in the common course of things, that all the knowledge may be obtained by them which is necessary to present and future happiness. That we should become acquainted with our Maker, with ourselves, and with the concerns of an eternal world, is one grand purpose for which we were created; and consequently, such as are children in years, should endeavour to be, as little as possible, children in understanding. Ignorance, in general, is the bane of human life; and in divine things it is particularly hurtful; for it brings along with it not only temporal, but everlasting infamy and ruin. Whereas it is a progressive improvement in the science of spiritual and eternal objects, which will distinguish us from the brutes, give us an alliance with angels, and a resemblance to the divinity. It is a progressive improvement in the science of spiritual and eternal objects which will adorn, direct, and bless the life of man; render us valuable members of society, and train us up for immortality. Now, the sooner young persons seek after heavenly wisdom, the greater advances they will make in it, and a surer foundation will be laid for their substantial honour and felicity. Should not therefore, the youthful part of mankind open their ears betimes to the voice of instruction, that they may join with the increase of age an increase of favour with God and man? Must it not be peculiarly agree-

agreeable to the Father of lights, when his intelligent offspring, apply to that early cultivation of their rational faculties which shall render them, in some measure, like to himself? And will not the lovers of goodness be delighted when they behold the rising generation earnestly enquiring for the path of truth, duty, and eternal happiness?

3. Another of the virtues which, we may suppose, entitled the blessed Jesus to the character of the text, was his obedience to his parents. That he was obedient to his parents, we are expressly told in the preceding verse; and the Evangelist appears to have mentioned it on purpose to remove any doubt that might, in this view, lie upon the mind, on account of what had been recorded just before. It might, perhaps, have been surmised, that our Saviour's stay in Jerusalem, and his answer to his mother, when she found him in the temple, were not entirely consistent with the reverence which was due to her. But St. Luke takes away the ground of any suspicion of that kind, by informing us that our Lord went down with Joseph and Mary, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. His tarrying behind, was, perhaps, done by a superior direction; and when he had performed his heavenly Father's will, he returned to that regular course of submission which he always exercised towards his earthly parents. As he was obedient to them during his childhood and youth, so, when he arrived to mature age, he did not omit every proper instance of respect. This is particularly

larly evident from his dying recommendation of his mother, to his beloved disciple, St. John; in consequence of which that amiable Apostle immediately took her to his own house, and, in conformity to his divine master's affecting intimation, behaved to her as a son.

I am not insensible that there seems to be something harsh in the answer which Christ gave to Mary, when they were present together at the marriage of Cana in Galilee; "*Woman, what have I to do with thee? mine hour is not yet come.*" But this harshness only arises from the different methods of address which prevailed in former times. For the word, *Woman*, in the ancient countries and ages, was frequently addressed to Ladies of the highest distinction and quality. We find our Saviour making use of it in his dying recommendation just referred to, "*Woman behold thy Son:*" and that, we are sure, was a time when he treated his mother with the utmost tenderness and regard. As to another expression in his answer, *what have I to do with thee?* It might as well be rendered, what hast thou to do with me; and is no more than a gentle rebuke to Mary, for prescribing to him in the exercise of his miracles; which was certainly a matter wherein she had not the least right to interpose.

If then, the blessed Jesus, who was conceived, in an extraordinary manner, by the power of the Holy Spirit, and who was peculiarly the Son of the most High God, condescended to obey not the virgin alone, who

was instrumental of bringing him into the world, but even Joseph who was only his reputed father, ought not the same temper and conduct to be considered as absolutely incumbent upon all young persons? The ties of duty to our parents are particularly strong and affecting. Our parents derive a right to our submission from their having been the means of introducing us into life: but this right is abundantly enforced by the care they have taken of us, and the blessings they have poured upon our heads. It would not be easy to express the anxious concern that resides in a father and a mother's breast, for the preservation and welfare of their offspring. It would not be easy to express the tenderness they manifest for their children, the pains they go through to make them happy, and the mighty benefits they confer upon them in the course of their education. Indeed, so vast are our obligations to the terrestrial authors of our existence, that not to revere them would be quite unnatural; and those who can treat them with ingratitude, disobedience, and contempt, are monsters of the worst kind. Nay, the pert forwardness of some who are not otherwise, it may be, very undutiful, is extremely disagreeable to a delicate and thinking mind. Nothing can more recommend the rising generation to the esteem of mankind in general, and to the regard of the wise and good in particular, than their being early distinguished by a respectful, affectionate, and submissive behaviour towards
their

their parents: and that such a behaviour is equally acceptable to our great Creator, is fully proved by the fifth commandment, which is the only one that hath an immediate promise of the divine temporal favour. The same precept is renewed and re-enforced by our Lord himself; who, in so doing, hath added his high authority to his excellent and amiable example.

4. Another of the virtues which, we may suppose, entitled the blessed Jesus to the character of the text, was his diligence. Notwithstanding his heavenly original, he appears to have embraced the trade of his reputed father, and to have been an artificer; whether in wood, or some other material, is not perhaps, absolutely certain; though it is most probable, from the general use of the original term in Greek writers, that it was in wood. By this trade, whatever it was, he did, in all likelihood, provide for his support; and it is reasonable to believe that he continued in it till near the time of his public ministry.

Now, what a noble pattern of laudable industry, did our Saviour, by such a conduct, afford! If Christ did not think mechanical labour beneath him, much less should we grudge some degree of toil, who cannot, without it, properly discharge the part allotted us in life! No ranks or conditions of men are to be exempted from diligence, in one shape or other: for without the exertion of it the rich and the great would be as little able to perform the duty that lies upon them, as those who

are in the meanest circumstances. It is not only requisite to our temporal subsistence and accommodation, but it is absolutely necessary, likewise, to the cultivation of our minds, our general usefulness in the world, and our advancement in piety and universal goodness. On the contrary, is not idleness the parent of poverty, the bane of every thing rational, manly, and social; the inlet to temptation, and the source of evil thoughts, and evil actions? Young persons, therefore, should early cultivate that habit of industry on which their present and eternal welfare depends. They should engage in an earnest prosecution of the various purposes of life, and an ardent pursuit of the grand end of their being. Thus will they become qualified for the approbation, the confidence, the favour of the valuable part of mankind; and thus will they please that God who did not intend that our faculties should be buried in sloth; but who gave them to be actively employed for our own advantage, for the benefit of our fellow creatures, and for the honour of our Maker. Pools of standing water soon grow corrupt, offensive, and unwholesome; whereas the running stream continues clear, and pure, and healthful.

5. The humility and modesty of Jesus were among the virtues which we may suppose, entitled him to the character of the text; and which should be possessed by young persons in general, in order to their obtaining the same character. Such was the condescension of our
Lord,

Lord, that he appeared in a mean station of life; and when he was found in this condition, his conduct was entirely suited to it; for he was meek and lowly in heart. He claimed none of the prerogatives that were naturally due to his high dignity; but became the servant of all. Though he was the great, the promised Messiah, he led his youth in privacy, and made no pretences to distinction. Nor have we any reason to doubt but that his modesty was equal to his humility. When he had entered upon his public ministry, when miracles attended his voice, when he was surrounded with applauding multitudes, we find nothing vain, nothing assuming, in his behaviour. May we not, therefore, be well assured that he possessed the same disposition, before he appeared on the stage of open action? Perhaps, his conduct in the temple, when he was about twelve years old, may be thought inconsistent with what has been said: but it will not be deemed so, when that affair is rightly considered. For as to his hearing the Doctors, and asking them questions, there seems to be no more in it than what was customary. It was the design of these meetings that the teachers of the law should give instruction to such as desired it; and, therefore, every one had a liberty to seek for information, and to propose his doubts. Our Saviour did not go up unto the seats of the preceptors, and dispute with them, as is often imagined, but sat at their feet as a learner: so that the whole affair was transacted with the utmost decency.

And

And did Christ, though in himself so rich, condescend to become poor upon our account? Was he so lowly, so humble, so unassuming? What a lovely pattern, then, hath he given to young persons! They, surely, have abundant reason for humility and modesty, because they know so little of themselves, of mankind, and of things in general. As youth must of necessity be greatly deficient in wisdom and experience, there is a particular impropriety in their being haughty, proud, and vain. They should, therefore, possess humility and modesty of mind, if they would excel in qualities which are allowed by all to be peculiarly amiable and becoming. We generally and justly presume that where these virtues exist, there is merit. And though it may sometimes happen that such as have, otherwise, great accomplishments, are not without a considerable tincture of vanity and self conceit, yet this circumstance is a degradation of their characters; and, upon the whole, it will be found that humility and modesty are the surest tests of worth and goodness. That these attainments are as agreeable to God as they are to man, is plain from the reason of things, and from the express declarations of scripture; which informs us that he resisteth the proud, but giveth grace, or favour, to the humble.

6. Another of the virtues which, we may suppose, entitled the blessed Jesus to the character of the text, was his integrity. With what steadiness our Saviour pursued the work which the Almighty had appointed him to per-

perform, and adhered to truth, though he was opposed by the malice of his inveterate enemies, is evident from his whole history. And that this disposition prevailed in him betimes, may be collected from his conversation with the doctors in the temple. For it is probable, among other things, that he modestly insinuated some objections to their traditions, and their false interpretations of the law. He was then about his heavenly father's business; and when that was the case, nothing could divert him from the course of his duty. When the cause of God, when the interests of religion, when the instruction and happiness of immortal Beings were in question, no veneration for established names and opinions could allure him, no power of the mighty could terrify him from declaring and acting what was right.

I need not say how becoming such a temper as this is in young people. A fervent affection for, and an invariable regard to truth, in all their words, and all their actions, is one of the first things which should be deeply impressed upon their minds. A violation of truth debases our rational nature, exposes us to contempt, overturns the basis of social peace and order, and must be highly disagreeable to that Being who hates every false way. On the contrary, an inflexible regard to it affords a solid and inward satisfaction, obtains an honourable reputation in the world, and recommends us to that God whose veracity and rectitude can never fail. If, therefore, the rising
gene-

generation would lay a just foundation for the favour of men, and, above all, for the favour of the eternal Deity, they should have their conversation in simplicity and godly sincerity, and be, like Nathaniel, *Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile.*

7. Another of the virtues which, we may suppose, entitled the blessed Jesus to the character of the text, was his moderation. By moderation I here understand the whole management of our appetites and desires; as including temperance and chastity, with regard to sensual gratifications; contentment with respect to the dispensations of providence; and meekness with reference to the government of our passions of anger and revenge. Now, must not that Saviour, who submitted to a mean condition in life, who endured the greatest afflictions without a repining word, who, *when he was reviled, reviled not again, when he suffered, threatened not*; have possessed moderation in the most extensive sense of the word, and in the highest degree? If we search his history with the utmost exactness, we shall find nothing that leads to excess, nothing wanton, nothing uneasy, nothing boisterous in his temper and behaviour. On the contrary, shall we not meet with the strictest abstinence and self denial, the most unreserved acquiescence in the determinations of his heavenly Father, and the most consummate patience and gentleness under all the calumnies and injuries of his enemies? Such magnanimity of mind, as this was, must certainly have had its foundation

tion in the early part of his life ; and it is of absolute importance that youth, in general, should begin in the same manner. On the regulation of their desires, the true excellence of their characters, and their real happiness essentially depend. And unless this regulation takes place in them betimes, they will become the slaves of appetite and passion, than which there cannot be a more ignominious, a more detestable, or a more wretched slavery. Young persons, therefore, should exercise the great duty of self government. They should keep their wishes within the bounds of temperance and chastity ; consider that station of life as the best which providence hath appointed ; and be mild, gentle, and patient. It is on the side of sensual pleasure that the first and most dangerous attacks will be made upon their virtue ; for which reason a double guard should be set on that side. And if, through the blessing of the Almighty, they do actually attain the universal moderation we are speaking of, they will then secure their true interest and glory : they will then be amiable in the eyes of men, and be regarded with approbation by that God who bestowed his temporal blessings upon us to be used, but not to be abused ; and who implanted certain desires and affections in our breasts, not that they should have dominion over us, but that they should be directed to the purposes of wisdom and goodness. Once more,

8. Another of the virtues which, we may suppose, entitled the blessed Jesus to the character

rafter of the text, was his benevolence. A quality which shone with such amazing lustre in the whole conduct of our Lord, must have early displayed itself in his mind. Indeed, it was love, surprizing love, which animated his life from its opening to its concluding period, and which still directs his dealings with his church and servants. The Saviour was, therefore, without doubt, in his younger years, and in his private station, remarkable for the sweetness of his disposition, and for the readiness with which he engaged in every humane and benevolent action. Though he then moved in a less extensive sphere, his heart burned with the same flame of kindness, generosity and compassion which afterwards broke out with such astonishing ardour; and it was his employment and delight to do good. This seems to be intimated in the text, when it is said that *he increased in favour with God and man*. For God will be particularly pleased with the exercise of that temper which hath the nearest resemblance to his most distinguished and darling Attribute; and nothing attracts the esteem and affection of our fellow creatures so much as humanity and mercy.

Now, doth not this charming behaviour of our Lord afford a noble example of the amiable and benevolent dispositions which should be possessed by every youthful mind? All young persons, therefore, should early cultivate the tender and social feelings. They should abhor the least instance of cruelty, even to brutes; and, with respect to men, should entertain
those

those kind, generous, and beneficent sentiments, which will inspire them with universal candour and charity; make them solicitous to spread happiness around them, and to promote the harmony and union of the world. We need not stay to prove that the exertions of such pleasing affections will be highly applauded by our brethren of human nature, and peculiarly agreeable to our heavenly Father. That benevolence demands the veneration, the love, the praises of our fellow creatures, is evident to the slightest observation: and that God singularly delights in it, is plain from all his nature and from all his conduct; from all the precepts and motives with relation to it, which he hath set before us; precepts and motives so numerous and so strong that it would require a great length of time to exhibit them in their proper light.

Thus we have endeavoured to point out the virtues which, we may suppose, entitled the blessed Jesus to the character of the text; and which should be possessed by all young persons, in order to their obtaining the same character. Several inferences might be drawn from what has been said, but we shall confine ourselves, at present, to two.

1. We may perceive the importance and necessity of the religious education of youth. The virtues we have had occasion to mention, are such as make the possessors of them increase in favour with God and man. They are virtues most lovely and excellent in themselves; absolutely necessary to deliver us from the

deepest misery, and to procure us the highest bliss our natures are capable of, both for the present and the future life. What, therefore, can be more essentially momentous than to inculcate these attainments and graces upon young persons as early as possible? An assiduous care, in this respect, may, by the blessing of the Almighty, preserve the rising generation from infamy and ruin, and lay a solid foundation for their temporal and eternal felicity.

If parents, therefore, to whom the forming the minds of the next age is consigned, neglect the dear objects committed to their charge, their conduct will be inexpressibly absurd, inexpressibly cruel, and inexpressibly wicked. Into your hands, O! ye fathers and mothers, ye relatives that supply their places, ye guardians and tutors, hath the Almighty put the greatest trust that can possibly be put into the hand of man; and he hath appointed, in the course of his providence, that on your execution of this trust, the knowledge, the piety, the goodness, the welfare of posterity, shall principally depend. What words, then, can sufficiently describe the importance of the duty that lies upon you! All words are entirely unequal to the task of describing the importance of the duty that lies upon you! May your attention to the discharge of it, be proportionable to its importance!

But there are parents, who from their want of knowledge and leisure, and their low stations and circumstances in life, are incapable
of

of giving their offspring a proper education. There are parents, whose children, if not rescued by the hands of benevolence, will be exposed to ignorance, vice, and misery. With respect then, to such unhappy objects, what do reason and humanity, patriotism and religion, call upon us to perform? Why reason and humanity, patriotism and religion, call upon us to exert our liberality, in communicating, to the children of such parents, that sacred instruction in the principles of piety, righteousness, and salvation, which, by the divine blessing, may be the means of rendering them sober and virtuous in private life, useful members of society, sincere and humble Christians, and heirs of immortality.

Permit me, in this view, to recommend to your protection the CHARITY SCHOOL in Gravel lane, Southwark; the foundation of which was laid in 1687, during the reign of that tyrannical and bigoted prince and papist, king James the second; when one Poulton, a Jesuit, with the intention, no doubt, of spreading the errors and corruptions of popery, gave public notice that he would instruct the children of the poor gratis. To counteract so insidious and dangerous a design, three worthy Christians, protestants, and Gentlemen, Mr. Arthur Shallet, Mr. Samuel Warburton, and Mr. Ferdinando Holland, laid the foundation of the present school. The number of scholars at first was only forty, but it now amounts to two hundred. The children are instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic; and the girls

girls are taught to sew and knit. Besides the instruction which they all receive, they are provided with Spelling books, Writing and Cyphering books, without any expence to their parents. The patrons of this charity, who have no view but to the common good, admit children without distinctions of party : and as the school is situated in one of the poorest parts of the town, amidst watermen, fishermen, and other labouring people, it is singularly useful on that account.

The expences of the institution, which is the first of the kind wherein the protestant dissenters were concerned, have been defrayed by the gifts and subscriptions of private persons, by an annual collection in this place, and by the kind remembrances of the well disposed in their last wills.

The short state of the school now laid before you, is sufficient, without any farther arguments, to recommend it to your affectionate and liberal regard. You will not permit the first valuable design of the kind, in which our pious ancestors were engaged, just when they were nearly emerging out of a state of persecution, to die, or even to decrease in your hands. You will not fail to shew the candour and enlargedness of your minds, by patronizing a charity, which, overlooking the religious differences amongst protestants, hath in view the general welfare of the community. You will never permit so important and extensive an object, as *that* of training up, in a continual succession, two hundred
neces-

necessitous children, in the Christian principles, temper, and practices, in the graces and virtues which will cause them, as they increase in stature, to increase in favour with God and man——You will never permit such an object to plead with you for encouragement in vain. Neither will you, I am sure, forget that the original purpose of the institution, in opposing the prevalence of the enormities and tyranny of the church of Rome, demands your most zealous attention. An alarm, with regard to the increase of popery amongst us, hath lately gone abroad: how justly, I do not purpose here to enquire. But of this I am certain, that popery, in itself considered, whatever may be thought of some of its professors, is so absurd, so superstitious, so idolatrous, so wicked, and so cruel a system, that we cannot be too much upon our guard against it; and that we ought to withstand the progress of it by every wise, rational, and Christian method. Now, I know of no method more effectual to the attainment of so valuable an end, than the early introduction of young minds to an acquaintance with the holy scriptures. The holy scriptures, seriously and diligently perused, will be an eternal bar to the admission of the doctrines and practices, the spirit and the claims, of the church of Rome. In this respect, as well as in others, the word of God will be a light to our feet, and a lamp to our paths.

Besides these important arguments in favour of the present charity, arising from the state
of

of it which hath been laid before you, it comes recommended by many other powerful and affecting considerations. But I shall not now insist upon them, because they have often been repeated; and because the few worthy persons who give us their attendance on occasions of this kind, appear among us with hearts which have already devised liberal things. I shall therefore conclude the discourse with observing,

Secondly, that we should be solicitous to imitate the character which is given of Jesus in the text. This is an exhortation that may, with propriety, be addressed to persons of all ages and stations. There is not one of the virtues we have specified, excepting that of subjection to parents, but what we may each of us justly be called upon to transcribe into our own tempers, and to maintain in our own conduct. Are not the youthful and the aged alike obliged to have a regard to their Maker in the whole of their deportment, to cultivate valuable knowledge, and to live in the exercise of diligence, humility, integrity, moderation, and benevolence?

But I would particularly urge it upon young persons, that they should endeavour to excel in these divine attainments. Ye have heard what the virtues were, which adorned the opening scene of the Redeemer, when he dwelt upon earth. Ye must have reflected that they are virtues in themselves most excellent and becoming. Ye have seen what a happy tendency they have to make you in-crease

crease in favour with God and man. Can it, then, be needful for me to persuade you to seek after such lovely, such valuable accomplishments? Some of you, it may be, are studious to adorn your persons with propriety and elegance; and there is nothing blameable in a decent regard to the dress of the body. But should not the dress of the mind claim your first and principal attention? *That* is the point which should never be forgotten, if ye have any concern for your real ornament, your real glory, and your real felicity. Be induced, therefore, to put on the Lord Jesus Christ; to put on the graces of his character, as the cloathing the most essentially necessary, and the most truly amiable. And, that ye may advance to higher and higher improvements, look up to the Almighty with earnest supplications, that, by his divine aid, ye may be transformed more and more after the image of the Saviour.

I shall add a few words to the children of the charity.

Ye, my young friends, are very happy in being put to school. Ye might have been wicked and miserable, without being able to read and write; and without having any Testaments or Bibles. Ye might have been brought up in cursing and swearing, instead of praying to God for his blessing, and praising him for his mercies. Ye might have been hated by good men, and sent, at last, to hell. But now ye are taught to read, and write, and cypher; and are bidden to serve

E

God,

God, day and night. Be careful, then, to mind the directions that are given you. Love and fear God ; keep his commandments ; and always pray to him, when ye get up, and when ye go to bed. Never forget going to church or meeting, on a Sunday. Do not neglect your books ; obey your master and mistress ; and be thankful to the gentlemen and ladies who pay for your teaching. Be modest and humble. Never tell a lie, upon any account. Be not quarrelsome or fretful, but always good-natured to one another. Thus will ye grow in favour with God and man, and encourage your friends to continue their kindness to you, and to others after you.

And now, O ! thou most gracious Parent of the universe, grant that these children may prove such valuable members of society, and such sincere Christians and Protestants, that the charity which instructs them may never want generous patrons, so long as it is conducted on the wise, benevolent, and pious principles upon which it is founded, and so long as human misery shall call for human compassion and assistance. Amen.

F I N I S.

6 JU 65